




DAVID SANDERS, PH.D.
Director

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
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(213) 351-5602

July 10, 2006

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To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
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Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D. 
Director

EXTENSION REQUEST: JUNE 7, 2006 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #69-C: A PLAN TO IMPROVE THE DEPARTMENT'S EXISTING OUT-OF-HOME CARE MONITORING RESOURCES

On June 6, 2006, in response to a motion by Mayor Antonovich and Supervisors Knabe and Molina, the Board ordered the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Chief Administrative Office and County Counsel to report back in 30 days on a plan to improve existing monitoring resources in a way that will ensure that all out-of-home placements where the County's foster children reside will be subject to a consistent, efficient, high quality level of oversight. In order to respond to your request, the Department has:

- Reviewed with the California Department of Social Services and the Children's Research Center progress towards developing a proposed Structured Decision Making System for Assessment of Substitute Care Providers. This will consist of automated structured tools with clearly defined criteria for matching child needs with placement resources, and a research-based risk assessment instrument that determines the level of agency support and services recommended to increase placement stability. Initial field testing of the preliminary tools will be completed in October 2006.
- Conducted research regarding the feasibility of creating an inspection program and the use of State funds to inspect out-of-home care, similar to the Public Health Facility Inspection Division. We are currently comparing this to the monitoring processes for out-of-home care that the Department currently has in place.

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- Scheduled discussions with Community Care Licensing to explore various options, including the advantages and disadvantages, of Los Angeles County assuming a level of responsibility over foster home licensing and monitoring.
- Developed a plan to establish a small Foster Home Assessment unit consisting of four CSWs to inspect the State licensed homes in Los Angeles County and begun developing protocol and policy for this staff to improve the safety and stability of children placed in licensed foster homes.
- Reviewed Division 31 regulations regarding case management services/activities and efforts made towards establishing and enhancing resources for the Kinship Support Division, to maintain and improve the quality of life for children placed in relative/non-relative extended family care.

My Department is requesting a brief extension of 30 days to analyze and fully report on activities and potential legislative changes related to monitoring different placement settings, to gain further input from providers, and to address some concerns expressed by the CAO and County Counsel.

Unless otherwise directed, I will proceed with a new Board report submission date of Tuesday, August 15, 2006. If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Manager, Board Relations Section, at (213) 351-5530.

DS:LP:TS:emm

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors